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STUDIES IN THE TEMPTATION OF THE SON OF GOD

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STUDIES IN THE TEMPTATION OF THE SON OF GOD

BY

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LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS
1916

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
Introduction		vii
Studies in the Temptation of the Son of God:		
I.	The Temptations of the Son of God were real Temptations	1
II.	His conquest over sin the pledge and foretaste of ours	9
III.	Fresh liability to Temptation the result of the new powers which the Son of God received at His Baptism	15
IV.	The Gospel Narratives of the Temptation	21
V.	The Trial by Hunger	27
VI.	Daring the Son of God to make a display of His Faith in His Father	35
VII.	Satan claims the Homage of the Son of God	43
VIII.	Satan unmasked	50
IX.	The Light of Life	56
Epilogue:		
I.	The Presuppositions of the Narrative	63
II.	What did Jesus mean by the Coming of the Kingdom?	67
III.	The Messiahship and the Divine Sonship of Jesus	73
IV.	Our Lord's use of "the powers of the age to come"	88
Two studies in the conditions of the exercise of Supernatural Power:		
A.	The Power of the Son	91
B.	The Laws of Spiritual Healing	98

TO

WILLIAM PORCHER DU BOSE

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

OF THE DEBT

THAT CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

OWES TO HIM

ON

THE MOST VITAL OF ALL PROBLEMS

INTRODUCTION

THESE studies were written in the first instance for the instruction of a comparatively small body of Church workers. They appeared month by month in the *Lay Reader Magazine* from March to December, 1914. They are now reprinted by the kind permission of the Editors, because, though only part of a larger plan, they are complete in themselves, and the subject with which they deal makes them peculiarly suitable as an illustration of the task that I have undertaken, and because I feel that in the execution of my task I shall do well to seek the criticism of a wider circle than that which is supplied by my personal friends among the Lay Readers.

For the object that I have in view is to help devout Christians to read the Gospels for themselves after a method and from a point of view with which, I fear, far too many are still unfamiliar.

The members of an ordinary congregation

may for the most part be expected to be quite clear as regards their obligation to believe that their Lord Jesus Christ was "Perfect God." But they will not be found to be by any means equally clear as to the relation in which this element in their Creed stands to the perfect humanity of the same Lord Jesus Christ with which it is inseparably connected.

The Source of our difficulty in accepting the truth of the Perfect Humanity of Our Lord.

Their perplexity is due in great measure to the way in which the ideas of Godhead and Manhood are, as a rule, put before them. Our teaching with regard to the nature of God is apt to start, as it does, for instance, in "The Athanasian Creed" and in "The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion," from a verbal definition. And any such attempt to express the distinctive characteristics of Godhead must be couched in terms which are either negative, such as "uncreated," "incomprehensible" that is "infinite," "without body, parts or passions," or vaguely universal, such as "omnipresent," "omniscient," "omnipotent." They lay stress of necessity for the purpose of definition on the points in which

Godhead differs from Manhood. And so, when on the strength of them we try to conjure up the idea of God before our imagination, we find ourselves confronted by a vague featureless abstraction. And at the same time we cannot escape an uneasy suspicion that there must be something like a direct contradiction in terms in speaking of the same Person as at once God and Man.

The practical result on the study of the Gospels is that our people come to them expecting to find the portrait of a Divine Being, who, though "He was found in fashion as a Man," was by nature fundamentally different from all other human beings, with an inner life of motive and will, which it is hopeless, if not positively irreverent, to try to understand.

The dangers of the present situation.

Now this is a perilous situation. For, on the one hand, God has not revealed Himself to us in the logical categories which we are forced to use when we try to express the revelation that He has given us of Himself in the terms of a philosophical system, but in "the Word made flesh." "Christianity,"*

* O. C. Quick, *Modern Philosophy and the Incarnation.* S.P.C.K.

as has recently been pointed out in a most suggestive essay, "Christianity as distinct from all other religions stands for the perfection of the belief that God uses man's own nature to reveal Himself." And unless we can in a real sense know Jesus we must remain shut out from the knowledge of the Father.

And, on the other hand, experience shows that there is a real danger lest an ill-instructed student should find the whole fabric of his faith upset by the study of the Gospels, as soon as his eyes are opened to see that the portrait that they present to us is the portrait of one who was very man. So great is the shock of the discovery, and so overwhelming is the new sense of reality that it brings into every line of the familiar story.

It may therefore save some misunderstanding if I define at the outset the standpoint from which these studies are written and the method which, however imperfectly, I set myself to follow.

My presuppositions.

I am fully convinced that the revelation which God has given us of Himself in Jesus Christ is mediated, to use the words of a great

American theologian, Dr. W. P. Du Bose, through "a perfectly human and humanly perfect" personality.

I believe that "the Word became flesh" in order that God might draw near to us by sharing to the full all that belongs to a distinctly human experience.

So far I am in complete sympathy with what I believe to be the dominant motive in the earnest, critical work that has for the last century been devoted to the study of the Gospels. I believe that it is of vital importance that we should recover the sense, which has become dormant in the popular Christian consciousness, that the life of Jesus was in reality, and not in seeming only, the life of One who was truly Man.

At the same time, I am not prepared to lay down beforehand what is and what is not possible within the limits of a perfect human personality, whether in respect of knowledge or of power: nor what further mysteries may be found to underlie a perfect human personality if such should appear on the scene of human history.

I feel that there is considerable danger in coming to the study of the documents by which alone we can get into touch with the

life of Jesus with fixed preconceptions on these points.

I do not assume that the Evangelists were infallible. But I feel that we have strong grounds for confidence in their substantial accuracy. And I think that there is room for an attempt to read afresh the life of Jesus, as it is unfolded before us in the different scenes that they have recorded, on the supposition that they are recording faithfully words that He uttered and deeds that He wrought, striving to interpret every word and every act, if I may without irreverence use the phrase, "from within," as the expression of a consciousness akin to ours, and under conditions to which our own experience may provide a key.

"The Temptation" a specimen and test of my method.

It would be difficult, I think, to find a better subject than that provided by the story of "The Temptation" for testing the validity of the method which I am advocating. It is a story which in many ways is at the furthest remove from normal human experience. The setting is strange and unearthly. Satan appears in it in person, as well as Ministering

Angels : and the " exceeding high mountain " belongs to the country that prophets visit in their hours of vision (Ezek. xl. 1, Rev. xxi. 10) and is not to be found in the map of Palestine.

The Temptations themselves are all related to the Messianic consciousness. They turn on the possession of the powers of the age to come, on the method of asserting a right to the title " Son of God," and a claim to dominion over all the kingdoms of the world. Above all, the story records the experience of one who was sinless.

Is such an experience, we may well ask, genuinely human ? Can it be interpreted consistently in terms of a consciousness like our own ? Had we not better give up the subject at once as hopelessly beyond us ?

And yet, when we come to close quarters with the record, we realize that that which lay at the heart of each Temptation is independent of the imagery under which it is portrayed. Substantially the same temptations, that Jesus had faced in the wilderness, beset His path when He was moving in the busy haunts of men. The Tempter renewed his assault at least on one occasion through the lips of the chief of the Apostles. We need not therefore

be put off by the unearthly setting of the story. The effect of that is simply to concentrate our attention on the spiritual reality at the back of each temptation without the distraction that might hide its true nature from us when it reappears in the daily experience of the public ministry.

Again, the fact that the Temptations all belong to elements in the Messianic consciousness does not take them out of the category of the human. No doubt life in the Kingdom of Heaven is life lived on a higher level than the normal. It may well represent the next stage in human evolution for men who have learnt to respond to their spiritual environment. But it is a life which Jesus called His disciples to share with Him. So the fact that He must have been living it, before He could be exposed to these temptations, still leaves His experience within the reach of those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, in proportion as they are faithful in their following of Him.

And though the Temptations relate to the use of the powers of the age to come, it is worth noticing that they appeal to the same motives that control ordinary human action, and Jesus meets them in the light of lessons

drawn from the past failures of the Chosen People.

Lastly, even the unique fact of His sinlessness only shows that He perfectly fulfilled the law of the nature that He shares with us. It cannot be held to imply that He transcended its limitations. Man was not made to be the slave of Sin. And we ourselves must learn to rise in His strength and cast off the chains that bind us if we would enter on the fruits of His victory.

So there is no reason why we should refuse to regard the Temptation in the Wilderness as an integral part in a " perfectly human and humanly perfect " life. We may go forward without shrink in our bold attempt to interpret even this experience of the Son of God from within.

J. O. F. M.

STUDIES IN THE TEMPTATION OF THE SON OF GOD

I

THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE SON OF GOD WERE REAL TEMPTATIONS

"*One that hath been tempted in all points like as we are, apart from sin.*"—HEBREWS iv. 15.

Jesus not shielded from Temptation by His Baptism and all that the Baptism implied.

THE Baptism of Jesus marked His entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, and the signs which accompanied it throw light on the new life, which belongs to membership in that kingdom. They show that it meant for our Lord a life, even in the days of His flesh, of conscious communion with the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, as the fully accredited Son of God.

When we pass on to consider the recorded incidents in the life lived under these conditions, we are confronted at once with a scene

very different from anything that we should naturally have anticipated. "Jesus was led up," we read in St. Matthew iv. 1, "by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

There is, of course, nothing surprising in the fact of a retirement for a period of solitary communing with God. Quiet would be necessary wherein to master the new revelation vouchsafed to Him, and to learn the nature of the new powers and responsibilities that the gifts He had received brought with them. What startles us is the sudden appearance on the scene of "The Tempter." His is the one presence from which we should have felt sure that entrance into the kingdom would keep us free. But it is clear that in this we are mistaken. St. Paul warns us (Eph. vi. 12) that even "in the heavenlies" the Christian warrior has to wrestle with the spiritual hosts of wickedness, the world-rulers of this darkness, and the story of the Temptation in the Wilderness is a revelation in the terms of our Lord's experience of the directions from which assaults are to be expected. For the conflict which the Captain of our Salvation underwent forced His adversary, if we may continue St. Paul's figure in the terms of modern warfare,

to unmask all his batteries. So that thereafter no spiritual temptation could assail the Lord in the course of His public ministry which He had not already faced in private and overcome. And no attacks can be made on any of His soldiers which this record of His experience cannot help them to see in their true nature and to repel.

Nor by the fact that His Human Nature was in the unity of His Person taken up into the Divine.

There is, however, a serious difficulty in the way, which may prevent the story having its full effect upon us. It will be well, therefore, to try and remove it before we come to the study of the story itself.

The difficulty is this. However much the situations which our Lord had to encounter resemble those in which we find ourselves from time to time, we feel that His experience cannot in the last resort bear comparison with ours, because we are by nature sinful; but His Human Nature was, by virtue of the special relation in which it stood to His Divine Nature, inherently incapable of yielding to temptation.

This objection certainly raises deep ques-

tions, which it is well worth while to try to formulate precisely, though we may have to admit our inability to provide a final answer to them, because it is vital to us, as I have contended in the Introduction, to know whether it is or is not possible to interpret our Lord's life in the terms of our own human experience.

How can we reconcile the truth of His Humanity with the fact of His sinlessness?

Let us begin our study of this intricate problem by reminding ourselves of the facts for which any adequate solution must be prepared to give an account.

Let us take, first, the fact of our Lord's sinlessness. There is, I believe, no room for doubt in regard to the fact that Jesus bore from His cradle to His grave a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. From whatever source the power came, He succeeded in passing unscathed through the fires of temptation to which every human life is exposed during its course on earth.

The second fact, which is vouched for both by the natural implications of the Gospel narrative, and by the express statements of

the Epistle to the Hebrews, is this: The temptations which came to Him were real temptations. It is no shadow fight that we see portrayed in the Wilderness and in Gethsemane.

The difficulty is to know how to co-ordinate these two facts. Can we believe that His temptations were altogether like our own, when the issue was so different in His case from what it is in ours?

Does not the fact of His sinlessness, we are inclined to say, show that His nature was fundamentally different from ours? We cannot help sinning. He could, and did. The conclusion seems inevitable, until we realize what it implies. Then we are forced to pause. For it implies, when we look into it, that the blame for our sins rests not on ourselves, but on our nature; and similarly, that the merit of His sinlessness is to be ascribed to His nature, not to Him. This, in itself, is a conclusion which we feel instinctively to be false, apart from the fact that it makes it impossible to regard His temptations as strictly the same as ours.

Sinlessness is the achievement of a Person, not the attribute of a Nature.

The truth of the matter, however, is that there are not two human natures, one sinless and the other sinful, but one and the same human nature, of which He and we alike partake. Only, He was sinless under conditions in which we fail. To quote the deep and weighty words of Dr. Du Bose in *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, expounding Romans viii. 3 f. (p. 221): "*What the law could not do, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.*"

"Like and likeness in the New Testament do not mean 'like but different'; they mean like in the sense of identical. When our Lord was made, or became, in the likeness of man, He did not become something similar to but not the same as man; He became *man*. When He was tempted in all points like as we are, His temptations were not in some points only and not in others like our own; they were essentially and identically our own, with the sole additional circumstance, which does not affect the nature or character of the tempta-

tions, that whereas all we are overcome by them, He overcame them. And humanly speaking that is all the difference between sin and holiness. Sin or holiness cannot be in mere nature or condition ; they can be only in what we are or do in the nature or the condition. In the identical nature and condition in which all we the rest without exception are sinners, because sin through the nature or condition overcomes and enslaves us, in that precise nature and condition, with no further difference than this, Jesus Christ overcame sin and in doing so redeemed our nature from it and its consequences. His own utter and absolute sinlessness or holiness was just the essence of all Christianity, but that sinlessness, I can never tire of repeating, was no mere fact of His nature, human or divine, it was His work in our nature, the work of our salvation. And that it might be a work in our nature, it was necessary it should be our nature, precisely as it is, in which the work was done. When we call the flesh sinful, or speak of it as the flesh of sin, we do not mean that *it* is sinful, but only that it is that through which *we* are sinful. The flesh was only not sinful in Jesus because He was not sinful in it. His holiness in the flesh was the

destruction of sin in the flesh. At the same time He Himself was holy in the flesh only by not being in the flesh ; that is to say, by dying in it and to it, and living in and to God. This is the critical and crucial act in Him, which requires further explanation, at the same time that it will always defy or transcend full understanding."

II

HIS CONQUEST OVER SIN THE PLEDGE AND FORETASTE OF OURS

"*We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but He that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one gets no hold on him.*"—1 St. John v.18.

His victory won by real fighting.

AS we saw in our last study, the first point to be mastered in regard to our Lord's temptations in the wilderness is that they were real temptations. We reminded ourselves that, as the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us, He was in very deed tempted in all points like as we are. "He suffered being tempted." This is the source of His ability to sympathize with our infirmities, and to succour us in our temptations. This fact forced us to realize that His victory over the Tempter must have been in the truest sense His own act. We cannot ascribe it to anything exceptional in His human nature. Sinlessness is an attribute of a person, not of an impersonal abstraction.

We must believe, therefore, that His human will had again and again a real choice to make between a right course and a wrong, under circumstances which presented the wrong course in its most attractive form, or made the difficulties in the way of the right course seem most overwhelming.

And yet, in spite of all, He never swerved. Every assault that could be made on His integrity was made, and He, using no weapon that is not within the reach of any man, remained unbeaten to the end.

If we grant this, it is difficult to see what can be gained by discussing the theoretical possibility of a failure on His part on any particular occasion. Such failure was, in fact, impossible for Him, being what He was; because, as the issue showed, He was stronger than any force that could be brought against Him. So we need not try to conceive the inconceivable—the ruin of the universe—that such a failure on His part would have meant. It is enough for us to know that the same victory is within our reach at any and every moment in our lives. "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it"

(1 Cor. x. 13). And His victory can restore the ruin that our failures bring.

Failure no part of true humanity.

The universality of failure on our part makes it peculiarly difficult to dissociate the thought of sin from any nature that we can recognize as truly human. "To err," as the old Latin proverb says, "is human." So we need not be surprised at the low murmurings which have recently made themselves heard, showing that, to some minds, Jesus Himself would seem more human, if they could regard Him as not only capable of sympathizing with, but as actually subject to our infirmities.

There cannot be a more fatal mistake. "*God sent His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin*" for this very purpose, "*that He might condemn sin in the flesh*"—that is, that He might show that this pitiful excuse for our fall is a lie. We were not made to fall, but to overcome. To sin is no sign that we are true men. To sin is to be false to the image in which we were created.

Dependence on God as necessary for the Son of God as for us.

"None the less, to overcome is impossible to us in our own strength." That is no doubt true if we mean "trusting in our own strength," and leaving out of account the help and inspiration which we are made capable of receiving from God, and which, so far from superseding our own efforts, helps us as nothing else can to put forth all our energies and realize the latent capacities of our nature. But there is nothing in this to differentiate us from Jesus. For Him, as for us, the very attempt to be, or say, or do anything without dependence on the Father, would have the nature of sin. For Him, as for us, the principle St. Paul lays down in Romans xiv. 23 holds good, "*Whatever is not of faith is sin.*"

"Still it was a moral impossibility for the Eternal Son to cease for a moment to trust and obey His Father." We may well believe it. Yet that does not make His Faith less truly Faith, incapable of being tested in "the dark night of the soul" through which He had to pass for our sakes, or the obedience, which He learnt through suffering, any less the surrender of His human will to God.

In virtue of His victory we too may overcome.

This is worth bearing in mind. For the victory of Jesus over sin, like His victory over death, and like the Divine Sonship of His humanity, is not a mere pattern, it is the creative source of ours.

For if we grasp the truth of our regenerate nature, just so far as we are content to follow the guidance of the Spirit that we have received whithersoever He may lead us, we shall find ourselves stronger than any temptation that assails us. The same St. John that warns that "*if we say that we have not sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,*" says also, "*He that is begotten of God sinneth not, because He that was begotten of God*—the Eternal Son—*keepeth him, and the evil one fails to get a grip of him*" (1 St. John i. 8, v. 18). He goes even further, he says that it is morally impossible that we should go on living in sin. "*Everyone that is begotten of God,*" he in whom the new birth is a complete and accomplished fact, "*sinneth not, because His seed,*" the vital principle of his new life, "*abideth in him, and he cannot sin because he has been begotten of God*" (iii. 9).

We need not be afraid, therefore, lest faith

in our Lord's victory over the Tempter should prove inconsistent with the truth of His humanity, or set us out of reach of His sympathy. There is in it a store of Divine energy which can at any moment enable us in our turn to overcome. The Stronger than the strong man armed has come, and if we will only believe it, our common foe is spoiled and bound.

III

FRESH LIABILITY TO TEMPTATION THE RESULT OF THE NEW POWERS WHICH THE SON OF GOD RECEIVED AT HIS BAPTISM

"*Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*"—St. Matt. iv. 1.

Why we associate the thought of defilement with temptation.

WE have been discussing in the last two Studies some of the general questions suggested by the fact of our Lord's victorious conflict with the Tempter in the Wilderness. It is for some reason peculiarly difficult for us to believe that it is possible for one in a nature like our own to have been really tempted just as we are tempted, and yet to have escaped without the least taint of defilement. The memories of our own failures seem to make it impossible. This is partly due to the fact that we lack the courage to face the full responsibility for our own sin, and to

acknowledge before God that it is indeed we ourselves that have sinned, of our own fault, and not of the fault of the nature He has given us. But it is, I believe, due even more to the fact that the consciousness of defilement, which clings to the memory of our past defeats, makes it almost impossible for us to dissociate the thought of temptation from the thought of sin. We know that we have in time past harboured a traitorous spirit in the fortress that God has given us to hold for Him, and so the very attraction that we feel towards a course that we know to be wrong is associated with the thought of guilt in our minds, and seems to bring fresh pollution, even though by God's grace we may find strength to repel the new assault.

It is this fact that gives such a terrible significance to the first conscious yielding to any temptation, and keeps us in bondage, until we grasp the reality of the power of Christ in us to set us free.

The only way to prevent ourselves from being paralysed by the memory of our own past failures is to fill our minds with the fact of His triumph; the experience of His victories in us and for us is no small part of the cleansing that St. John tells us we shall

find from His Blood, as we walk in the light (1 St. John i. 7).

At the same time it is of great practical importance that we should grasp clearly the fact that temptation and sin are entirely distinct the one from the other, and that no defilement attaches to anyone from the mere fact that he has been assailed by any temptation.

We are not tempted with evil but with good.

To establish this point we shall have to look closely into the nature and source of temptation.

Here the first point to notice is this : all temptation is no doubt *to* evil. It is a trial of our wills to see whether they are prepared to choose a course of action that is not consistent with the will of God for us. Yet we are not tempted *with* evil. What attracts us is always something good, or, at least something that is capable of putting on an appearance of good. We are tempted to please ourselves by indulging an appetite, or gratifying a taste, or exercising a faculty, which God has implanted in us, and which He means to minister richly to the enjoyment of those who will be content to look to Him, not

to themselves, for guidance in their use of it.

There is therefore nothing wrong in feeling an attraction towards the gratification of any appetite when the opportunity presents itself. The exercise of every faculty is meant to be pleasurable and so to be attractive in prospect. The feeling only becomes sinful if we go on indulging it, when we know that the gratification is at any particular time and under particular circumstances contrary to God's will for us.

If so, we can see that it is quite possible to be really tempted without being in any sense defiled.

Increase of power brings increase of liability to temptation.

A further point follows from this which we may dwell on at this stage, as it may help us to understand the inner connexion between the Lord's Baptism and His Temptation.

As our various appetites and faculties are the channels through which temptations come to us, so there is a strict relation between the extent of a man's endowments and the variety of the temptations to which he is exposed. Every fresh increase of power or faculty

brings with it of necessity the liability to a fresh kind of temptation. The right use of any new gift can only be mastered when the temptations to misuse, which come with it, are known and marked.

Therefore the Baptism of the Son of God was followed at once by His Temptation.

The special powers which membership in the kingdom brings with it are no exception to this rule. Our Lord had already, we cannot doubt, mastered the temptations, which come to a man on the plane of common human life, in His waiting time. If we are right in maintaining that He entered at His Baptism on the powers of the age to come, the conflict in the Wilderness must have been the occasion when He became conscious of the special directions from which temptations would come to Him through the channel of these powers, and learnt the limitations of their exercise, which are inherent in the sovereign law of perfect filial obedience to the Father's will.

In the light of these thoughts it will, I hope, become easier for us to realize that Jesus was indeed led by the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. It was a necessary

part of His preparation for the work that lay before Him in His public ministry. At the same time the last clause of the Prayer that He has taught us was answered triumphantly. He was not brought *into* temptation so as to be enmeshed in it. He was brought *through* it and *out of* it. He was delivered from the Evil One.

IV

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES OF THE TEMPTATION

WE have now completed our preliminary studies in the fact and nature of our Lord's Temptations. We can pass on to consider in detail the account of His conflict with the Tempter in the wilderness as it is given us in St. Matthew iv. 1–11 and St. Luke iv. 1–13.

The order of the Temptations as given by St. Matthew.

The two Evangelists are in substantial agreement, though with striking verbal differences, and, above all, a puzzling difference in the order of the three Temptations. The principle underlying the order in St. Matthew's account is certainly the easier to grasp. In this, the two Temptations that challenge our Lord's right to the title " Son of God " come first, and the dramatic unmasking of the

Tempter constitutes a natural climax to the whole.

Again, there is a natural expansion in what we may call the horizon of the Temptations in this arrangement. The first is limited to the circle of individual need. It appeals to the personal craving of hunger. The scene of the second is the Holy City, and springs from the consciousness of the inevitable national demand for a sign from heaven. The third includes in its scope all the kingdoms of the world. It turns on the price to be paid for the attainment of the promised dominion of the Messiah. It seems not improbable that St. John's warning (1 St. John ii. 16) against " the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vain glory of life," sums up one side of the teaching of the narrative in the order in which St. Matthew gives it.

The order in St. Luke.

St. Luke transposes the second and third Temptations. This seems at first sight, as Dr. Salmon suggests in *The Human Element in the Gospels*, to be a mere slip of memory, going back to the time when the story circulated from mouth to mouth, and had not yet been committed to writing. And yet we may well

feel that this is not an altogether satisfactory solution of the difficulty. We believe that even if the proximate cause were human infirmity, the Gospels have meant so much for the life of the Church in the past, and must mean so much for the Church in every age, that what we are inclined to call " accidents " in their composition must still have been subject to a Divine overruling. We are grateful, therefore, to Dr. Westcott for suggesting, in his *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, a clue to the significance of the changed order. Dr. Westcott regards the Temptations in St. Luke's arrangement as exhibiting the stages of growing intensity in the trial, piercing deeper and deeper into the hidden world of personality within. The first assault came through the channel of the physical need of the body ; the second was an appeal to human ambition through the imagination and feeling ; the third was a temptation to spiritual presumption. They affect in turn our relation to ourselves, to the world, and to God.

The narratives derived from the Lord Himself.

So regarded, no one can fail to find the order in which the Temptations are recorded

by St. Luke deeply suggestive. Indeed, the more I ponder on the completeness, and the richness of meaning underlying each arrangement, the more I am inclined to believe that they both rest ultimately on accurate recollections of teaching actually given by our Lord Himself to His disciples. It is fairly generally admitted that in one form or other the story can have no lower authority. There is no reason to suppose that the early Christian Church possessed sufficient imaginative power to create such a story for itself, or would have chosen such a theme for its exercise had it possessed the power.

It is also clear that the scenes depicted are scenes in a spiritual experience, not in a series of outwardly historical events. The Lord, no doubt, was for a time actually in the wilderness. But there is no need to assume that Satan appeared to Him in a visible form; or that He was miraculously transported to stand in the flesh on the pinnacle of the Temple; or that there is any mountain on the surface of the globe from which it would be possible for human eyes to gaze on all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the story embodies a spiritual experience in the

language of prophetic symbolism. And there is nothing improbable in the supposition that the Lord Himself must again and again have repeated the lesson to His disciples, varying the form in accordance with the special aspect of the experience which He wished to illustrate. If so, there is nothing extravagant in the suggestion that two of these forms have been preserved for our learning, to enable us to realize the many-sidedness, and the essentially spiritual character of the incident described.

Two features common to all the Temptations.

When we pass from the form to the substance of the narratives there are one or two features common to the whole series to which it will be well to call attention before we commence an examination of each Temptation in detail.

The first is this: Each Temptation is directly addressed to the Lord's Messianic consciousness. They are concerned with various methods of proving or of exercising His Divine Sonship, and of claiming and taking possession of His kingdom. They presuppose a consciousness of the possession of supernatural power. If, then, we are right

in concluding that the narrative comes from our Lord Himself, we have in it direct evidence that from the commencement of His public ministry Jesus knew Himself to be the Messiah, and that the exercise of supernatural power was to be an integral part of His work in revealing the Father and in establishing His kingdom.

The second point is this : The Tempter is in each case vanquished by a word from the Bible. The Lord overcomes by the help of the lessons written for the learning of all men in the storehouse of the past spiritual experience of God's people. These lessons He must have mastered during His waiting time. The key to the understanding of each stage in the conflict lies in the text which the Lord applies to it.

With these considerations in mind, we can go forward in our next Study with the examination of the first Temptation.

V

THE TRIAL BY HUNGER

"*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"—ST. MATT. iv. 4.

Why would it have been wrong to turn the stones into bread?

THE first Temptation springs simply and directly from the natural appetite of hunger. There is clearly nothing in itself wrong in the longing to appease it. But our Lord's word shows that He felt that it would have been a sin for Him to use His supernatural power to provide the means of satisfying it by turning the stones into bread. The problem before us, if we wish to understand the story and learn its lesson, is to determine what there was in the suggestion that made it wrong to yield to it. It is not at all easy to see why, granted that He possessed the power, He should have felt that this use of it was forbidden to Him.

Let us look at the circumstances. Jesus

has been in the wilderness without food for forty days. There is nothing to show whether this fast was, so to speak, conscious and deliberate, or whether He was so absorbed either in spiritual communion, or spiritual conflict, that the needs of the body had no chance of asserting themselves. The narrative seems to favour the second alternative, because it implies that it was not till the forty days were over that he felt hungry.*

In any case it is natural to suppose that when the claims of the body once more reasserted themselves, and "*He afterwards hungered*," His need was acute. It may well have seemed as if His life depended on the provision of bodily sustenance without delay. And His life, we must remember, was of value, as the commission He had just received testified, not for Himself only, but for His Father and for the world. Why then should He not put forth the power that was His as Son of God to make the stones into bread ?

It is not easy to see anything in the nature of the act, which would decide the matter. It has indeed been suggested by George

* The experience of St. Catherine of Genoa may supply an illustration of the power of the spirit in conscious communion with God to sustain the body without material food for considerable periods of time.

Macdonald in his first series of *Unspoken Sermons* that to turn stones into bread would have been not only "above," but "contrary to" nature in a way which for instance the turning of water into wine was not. Rain is always by the ordinary processes of life being transformed into the juice of the grape. But it would be equally true to say that the ears of corn are in the same way built up by the vital force of the plant out of the inorganic elements in the soil. The actual process implied in any of the creative miracles, like the original miracle of creation itself, transcends our comprehension. So that considerations of this kind cannot help us to the solution we are looking for. I have already, in our last study, stated my conviction that thekey is to be found in a careful study of the quotation from the Old Testament by which the Temptation was met.

The lesson of the Manna.

The experience of Israel in the wilderness was typical, in the simplest and most natural sense, because the trials through which they passed came directly from the fundamental facts of our human constitution. The deepest

and most obvious of these is our dependence on food. Under normal conditions our needs are supplied so regularly and in such profusion that we forget that we are not self-sufficient, and assume an attitude of independence both towards the world and towards God, which has no foundation in fact. The experience of Israel in the wilderness was designed to cut at the root of this delusion. The people were deliberately brought, so the inspired record teaches us, within sight of starvation "to humble them," and "to prove what was in their heart." Again and again they failed under the test. They broke out into rebellious, discontented, distrustful murmurings, which showed clearly enough how little they were prepared to trust God, and how ready they were to assert their own wills against His.

On the other hand the provision which God had in store for them by the gift of Manna supplied their necessity in such a way as to force them to realize not only His watchful care over them, but also the directness of their dependence on Him. The lesson of the Manna to that generation, and to all generations to the end of time, is that "*Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"

The response of the Son of God to the trial by hunger.

With these thoughts in our mind let us come back to the first Temptation. Do they not help us to understand it? The trial is, at the heart of it, the elementary human trial of hunger. It is sent with the same purpose to the Eternal Son of God as to the least of His brethren. He is brought face to face with the grim reality of starvation, to humble Him, or, if that form of expression seem to suggest that there was something in Him which needed to be brought low, let us say, "to teach Him the nature and power of humility" (as He learnt obedience) "by the things that He suffered": and so to "prove Him" by bringing into light by word and act the fundamental attitude of His whole being towards God.

The trial is the common human trial. Only in this case it is more searching because He has in His own hands the means of evading it. There was no obvious distrust in His Father, no open murmuring against the lot appointed Him, implied in turning the stones into bread, any more than there would have been in calling in the aid of twelve legions of angels

in Gethsemane. And yet He felt, if we may so speak, instinctively, that it would be a wrong use of the power committed to Him. The pangs of hunger, instead of making Him think first of Himself and snatch at ease by the shortest method available, made Him think first of His Father and the meaning of the strange experience into which He had been led. Light flashes on His path from the Sacred Book. He realizes His kinship with those who had hungered in the past, and the snare into which they had fallen stands revealed in its true nature before Him. The very purpose of the trial for Him, as for them, was to test obedience, and to teach through suffering a truth not to be mastered without pain. Clearly therefore He must, before all things, as the acknowledged Son of God, beware of self-originated action. He will prove that He is Son, if that truth needs confirmation for His own sake and for His brethren's sake, not by any outward display of His own power, but by inward obedience : by refusing to do anything but what He saw His Father doing. Just because He is Son, He must show the world that He cannot act independently; that He can and will trust His Father absolutely to provide such food as was necessary

as and when He thought fit. He will believe and act on His belief in the truth of the lesson contained for all men in the gift of manna to Israel in the wilderness. "*Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*"

Lessons learnt from the trial.

So the first Temptation is met and overcome. And out of it come lessons of deep spiritual import, things new and old, the old lessons with a new and inexhaustible depth and intensity of meaning for all time.

"*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*" "*As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of My Father*" —as my life is continually sustained and supported by His—"*so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me*" (St. John iv. 34; vi. 57).

"*Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? . . . Be not*

therefore anxious saying What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matt. vi. 25–35).

He had proved the truth of His words before He spoke them.

VI

DARING THE SON OF GOD TO MAKE A DISPLAY OF HIS FAITH IN HIS FATHER

"*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*"—St. Matt. iv. 7.

The scene of the second Temptation.

THERE is a complete change of scene between the first and second Temptation. The Saviour is led out of the solitude of the wilderness into the Holy City and placed on the most conspicuous spot in all Jerusalem, "the pinnacle of the Temple." The significance of the change is well illustrated by the only other narrative in which, as far as I know, "the pinnacle of the Temple" plays a part. It is the account of the Martyrdom of James, the Lord's brother, which Eusebius extracts from a second century writer, the Jewish Christian Church historian, Hegesippus (*Eccl. Hist.* ii. 23). The Scribes and Pharisees alarmed at the progress of Christianity at Jerusalem owing to the influence of James come to him and say, "We

pray thee restrain the people, for they have gone astray in regard to Jesus thinking Him to be the Christ. We pray thee to persuade all that have come to the Passover about Jesus. For we all listen to thee. For we and all the people bear witness that thou art just, and hast no respect of persons. Do thou therefore stand *on the pinnacle of the Temple*, so that thou mayest be conspicuous and thy words may be well heard by all the people, and persuade them not to go astray about Jesus. For all the tribes have come together with the Gentiles also on account of the Passover." So they set James on the pinnacle of the Temple, and when instead of making any recantation, James takes occasion to preach a Christian sermon, they went up and cast down James the Just, and they said one to another, "Let us stone James the Just." And they began to stone him, since he was not killed by the fall; but he turned round and knelt down saying, "O Lord God my Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The story itself has but scant claims to be regarded as historical. But coming from a Palestinian writer it is not likely to be wrong on a point of topography. It is therefore good

evidence for the fact that "the pinnacle" commanded one of the main courts of the Temple, I presume, the court of the Gentiles. In any case it was a natural place for a dramatic display before the crowds assembled at feast time.

The demand for a sign from heaven.

This change of scene brings a new element into the trial. For, though nothing is said of the presence of spectators, if the object to be attained by casting Himself from a height had been simply to supply a private test of God's faithfulness to His promise, any cliff in the wilderness of Judæa would have been sufficient for the purpose. We may be sure therefore that the subject of this Temptation is the use of supernatural power to compel popular faith in the commission He had received from His Father. The suggestion is that He should adopt this method of giving the Nation "the sign from heaven" which both the rulers and the common people demanded of Him again and again in the course of His Ministry as the price of their allegiance.

The proposal had obvious attractions. It appealed directly to His faith in God. It

comes characteristically in the words of Scripture. It is written, "*He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time thou dash Thy foot against a stone.*" Nor is it possible to say that the quotation is vitiated by the omission of the clause "*to keep Thee in all thy ways,*" which comes in the original after "concerning Thee," as if the promise only applied to the normal course of daily life. Of course it would not apply to self-chosen paths. But the very question to be decided was whether this act was or was not in the line marked out for Him by the Will of God. And the fact that the risk was one from which human flesh would naturally shrink, would make the temptation all the more subtle as a challenge to Faith. It is always hard not to do a thing when anyone "dares you" to do it.

The ground for the demand.

Of course, if this had been all, if the test proposed had been a mere display, the spiritual insight required for the defeat of the Tempter would not have been exceptional. But there was more behind. When Moses was sent to deliver Israel out of Egypt, his

commission was evidenced by the signs which God gave him to perform in the sight of the people. The ministry of Elijah in like manner began with, and his controversy with the prophets of Baal was decided by, a sign from heaven. It is true that the people were warned in Deuteronomy that a false prophet might give signs, and that no signs are recorded as having been worked by many of the greatest of the prophets. Yet the prophetic order had been in abeyance for centuries; surely some kind of sign was to be expected to mark its revival. Why would it be wrong to gratify this natural demand? If the popular faith in God was faint and wavering, what could be better calculated to revive and steady it than publicly to take God at His word, and let all men see that God did indeed deliver the man that put his trust in Him?

The demand in the light of the experience of Israel in the wilderness.

Light comes as before from the reply of the Lord to the Tempter. "*Again it is written* '*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*'" It is written in Deuteronomy vi. 16, and the verse ends "*as ye tempted Him in*

Massah." And if we pursue our enquiries a step further, we find that the people when tried by thirst (Exod. xvii. 7) in Massah, "*tempted the Lord, saying,* '*Is the Lord among us or not?*' "

In fact, if the experience of Israel is on the one side an abiding proof of God's watchful care over His people, and of the sufficiency of the supply for all their needs that is to be found in communion with Him, it is also full of warnings against the danger of refusing to be content with the signs God has already given. The reason why the generation that came out of Egypt failed to enter the promised land was just this as we read in Numbers xiv. 22, "*Because all these men which have seen My glory, and My signs, which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have tempted Me ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice; surely they shall not see the land.*" The demand for a sign under these conditions is far from being a sign of a weak faith, crying out like the father of the lunatic boy, "*Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.*" It is really rooted in rebellion. It is a deliberate attempt to force the hand of God. True faith must show itself by acknowledging the tokens that God has already given, and in patient and obedient

waiting on Him to fulfil His promises in His own time and in His own way. He had publicly declared Jesus to be His Son in the hearing of His appointed Forerunner. Neither for Himself nor for the people did that word need any further sign to establish it. The refusal to accept the witness was a token of a depraved condition which had nothing to look forward to but the sorest of judgments. "*What sign showest Thou that Thou doest these things?*" said the rulers of the people, when Jesus, fresh from the witness of the Baptist to the official deputation, cleansed the Temple at the first Passover in His Ministry. And He answered at once, "*Destroy this Temple.*"

And again and again when the demand for a sign was repeated He bore His testimony, "*An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. And there shall no sign be given it, save the sign of Jonah*" (St. Matt. xii. 39, xvi. 4; St. Luke xi. 29).

The God-given opportunity for the display of faith.

Jesus will never put forth His power to win the allegiance of men for Himself. He will go forward on the path which His Father had

marked out for Him. As that led to the Cross and beyond it, there would be abundant opportunity for letting men see whether He could trust God or not, and whether God would or would not deliver Him, if He did.

VII

SATAN CLAIMS THE HOMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD

"Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"
ST. MATT. iv. 10.

The bribe that Satan offered.

THE temptation on the mountain is, I think, the hardest of the three to understand. I do not mean that it is hard to realize the attractiveness of the offer. "All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" is a stupendous bribe however we regard it. And we may be sure that the vision that opened out before the pure imagination of Jesus was not that of the outward trappings, the mere pomp and tinsel of royalty, but of its inner reality. It must have been a vision of essential and acknowledged leadership in every department of life over men in every stage of development, and of the infinite possibilities of becoming a blessing to all men

everywhere that such leadership would bring with it. For His ideal of sovereignty consisted, as we know, in the service that He could render to others, not in the service that He could command for Himself (St. Mark x. 45).

Nor again is it hard to realize how so vast a vision should rise in the mind of one who had been declared to be the Son of God, the inheritor of the promises made by Psalmist and Prophet to the Anointed Son of David. By God's appointment (Ps. lxxii. 11) "*all kings should bow down before Him, and all nations do Him service.*" "*Dominion, and glory, and a kingdom were His* (Dan. vii. 14), *that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him.*" "*And His dominion,*" in contrast to the brutal world empires that had preceded Him, "*was to be an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*"

The vision may well transcend our powers of imagination, but it is not difficult to realize how it came to spread itself out before Him. What is hard is to conceive how Satan, even with the vision of this gift to help him, could venture to claim homage for himself.

The ground of Satan's claim to homage.

We can, of course, understand how hard it is for an ordinary reformer whose heart is set on securing a great and beneficent object not to think that the end justifies the means. It is hard not to believe that "to do a great right" it must be permissible "to do a little wrong," even when the price to be paid is seen in its true colours, known and recognized as evil. But we feel sure that Satan, whatever he had to offer, could have had no hope of success with Jesus if he showed himself, even for a moment, in his true character. He must in some way have transformed himself into an angel of light before he could draw near enough even to tempt. The price that he asked for the good gift that he promised to bestow must have been capable of being represented as in itself not evil but good. The difficulty lies in conceiving how such a transformation could be effected.

Light from the history of Israel.

Help comes once more from the study of the passage, quoted by Jesus in reply, supplemented this time by the fuller account of the words of the Tempter which we find in St.

Luke. The words, "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,*" are found in two contexts in Deuteronomy vi. 13 and x. 20. In each case they are closely connected with "*the first and great commandment*" (Matt. xxii. 37 f.). "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*" The special source of danger, to which Israel would be exposed when they found themselves in the Promised Land, is indicated most clearly in the words that follow in Deuteronomy vi. 14, "*Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people round about you.*"

When we realize the position in which the people of Israel found themselves in Palestine, we shall see how severe the temptation to disregard this warning must have been. We shall not be surprised at the sad story of their constant backsliding. They entered on their inheritance a nomad tribe with very little, as far as we can judge, of culture or civilization. They found themselves surrounded on all sides by a population much further advanced in all the arts of human life than they were. It must have been peculiarly difficult not to allow at least a subordinate share in worship and reverence to the local Baals, the

gods of the land, to whom the people among whom they dwelt ascribed all its gifts to them of corn and wine. And yet, as they found by bitter experience again and again, such worship led directly to national apostasy. Our Lord's use of Deuteronomy vi. 13 implies that He found in this assault of the Tempter a counterpart of this age-long trial of Israel.

Satan's power real though subordinate.

Light is thrown on the connexion by the words of the Tempter in St. Luke iv. 6, "*To Thee will I give all this authority and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.*" For in these words Satan, while implicitly disclaiming absolute and self-derived sovereignty, claims to have received from God a real authority, however limited and subordinate, and to claim homage for himself in respect of it as the price of the service he professed himself willing to render.

Now it is worth notice that our Lord does not challenge the claim to authority. There is, we may believe, a sense in which that claim is well founded. For any believer in the overruling providence of God there can be no power in the world that is not ultimately

derived from God. "*The powers that be,*" as St. Paul teaches us (Rom. xiii. 1), "*are ordained of God.*" Jesus Himself recognizes the truth of this principle in His words to Pilate in St. John xix. 11, "*Thou wouldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above.*" It underlies His attitude with regard to the payment of tribute to Cæsar. And he goes so far as to speak expressly of "*The Prince of this world*" in St. John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 2.

This helps us, I think, to see the appearance of good under which the temptation could present itself even to Jesus Himself. It was not only that the end to be attained was itself supremely attractive. The dominion, the authority and the power to bless were His by right. He had come to take possession of all the kingdoms of the world in His Father's name. The means for attaining it could assume a perfectly innocent air. The appeal was to a rightly grounded sentiment of deference to constituted authority and to a perfectly natural longing for human sympathy. And one of the lessons to be learned from the trial was the stern necessity for the crucifixion even of these natural instincts when an attempt was made to draw Him

through them from the path marked out for Him by the Master's will. He had to learn what it must cost to put the glory that comes from God before the glory that comes from man (cf. St. John v. 44, xii. 43) and to stand alone for God against the world. There is a real significance in the echo of this Temptation that we hear in the rebuke to Simon Peter in St. Matthew xvi. 23. For, indeed, to refuse the homage which Satan claimed was to brave his fiercest anger. It was to choose the way of the Cross.

There remains, of course, the question how Jesus can have known with such unfaltering certainty the path marked out for Him by God, and what there was in the way in which this seemingly innocent appeal was made that enabled Him to detect its essential evil. The consideration of these questions will occupy our next two studies.

VIII

SATAN UNMASKED

"*He whose might is his god.*"—HABAK. i. 11.

Where did the cloven hoof appear in Satan's claim?

WE were considering in our last study the third of our Lord's temptations in the order in which they are recorded by St. Matthew, the temptation on the mountain. We saw the attractiveness of the offer. The sovereignty that it promised brought with it boundless possibilities for serving men. It was, moreover, the rightful inheritance of the Son of David, who was also the Son of God.

We saw also that the condition proposed by the Tempter might put on a perfectly innocent colour. The powers that be are ordained of God. Why should they not claim homage for themselves in acknowledgment of the Divine source of their authority as the price of their support? And yet the Lord

met the subtle temptation at once with an indignant "Get thee hence, Satan."

The questions reserved for our last two studies were these: What was there in the form the temptation took to make clear to the spiritual eye its essential evil? and How are we to conceive of this wonderful sureness of spiritual vision in one who meets the Tempter with no other weapons than those which are within the reach of the weakest of His brethren?

We proceed then now to ask first, "Wherein lay the evil of the condition attached by Satan to the promise of his support?" At what point does "the cloven hoof," "the mark of the beast," appear?

Is it not in the mere fact of his wishing to make a condition? Granted that he had the power to do what he promised: granted that the power came to him from God: the fact that he sought to exact a price for his support is enough to show that in heart he claimed to be independent of God in his exercise of it. God had spoken. God had acknowledged His Son, and had set His Throne upon His holy hill.

From that moment the highest privilege of all created and derived authority was to

assist in the establishment of the Divine decree. But Satan, as the Prince of this world, instead of casting his crown before the Throne of God and of the Lamb, begins to bargain for his support. He strives to make capital for himself out of the trust he had received, though it were but a momentary acknowledgment of his superiority as a sop to his pride. There is the spot of selfishness, which marks the presence of essential evil, and shows that "The Strong One," God-given and God-sustained though his power was, was in fact setting himself against the Most High, and that the true Son of God had no choice but to spurn the offer and to take the consequences.

Might claiming homage for itself claims to be independent of Right.

If so, it is clear that in its deepest meaning this temptation marks the decisive moment in the age-long battle, to which the Church is pledged, and with which the nations of Europe have found themselves confronted with awful suddenness—the battle against every form of Might that claims for itself the homage and obedience which the will of man owes and can owe to Right and Right alone.

"*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus*" (Rev. xiv. 12). Let us listen to the comment on these words of a great prophet of the last century, Frederick Denison Maurice, in his *Lectures on the Apocalypse* (p. 216), a book which we shall all do well to read and re-read if we wish to understand the Day of the Lord which has already begun to dawn upon us.

"What," he writes, "what has the patience of the saints to do with that announcement respecting the worshippers of the beast which we heard just now? My brethren! to believe that the devil is not the lord of the world, that he cannot give the kingdoms of it to whom he will, is hard at all times, intensely hard in those times when evil and brute force has established its ascendancy, and the world is crying after it. Then it seems but the confession of an obvious fact to admit this dominion of the enemy of man. Nay, it will be asserted by some as a pious duty to hold this faith. 'Christ is to reign hereafter; but at present the earth is given up to the dragon.' I deem it impossible, while we think this, that we should not do some homage—yes, continual homage—to that power which we

suppose is uppermost. And therefore this book teaches the deep and all-important lesson that the patience of the saints consists in believing steadfastly that message of the angel concerning the beast (*vv.* 9–11), and in *not* believing any whispers and suggestions of his respecting his authority. So doing they keep the commandment, which has said, '*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.*' So doing they tread the path of Jesus, Who did with this commandment resist the adversary when he said, '*All these will I give Thee, and the glory of them, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*' He knew that to admit that lie—to confess that these kingdoms were in the hands of the evil one—*was* to fall down and worship him. He wanted no other homage. Christ might have the kingdoms hereafter, if He would grant them to be Satan's at that moment. He said, '*Get thee hence.*' In His strength everyone of His followers, in the darkest hour, when good appears most utterly defeated, is to say the same."

Modern instances of the same claim.

The European situation is, no doubt—confronted as we are by the unblushing

assertion of the doctrine that Might is Right —a case very much in point for us in England to-day. And we may well be thankful that we are entering our protest against it, cost what it may.

We must, however, be on our guard against supposing that this is the only form under which this temptation can assail us. If anyone wishes to see it in the form in which it is most likely to assail the Christian worker, and under which we have in the past most grievously been overcome by it, he cannot do better than study thoughtfully Bernard Shaw's play *Major Barbara*, with its heart-searching Preface. Mr. Bernard Shaw has not, as far as I can understand him, any solution of the problem that he raises. But in this, as in other cases, he can help us more than most modern writers to see what the problems are.

The second question, with regard to the source and nature of our Lord's spiritual insight, must wait till our concluding study.

IX

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

"*The Armour of Light.*"—Rom. xiii. 12.

Recapitulation.

WE have now completed our study of our Lord's Temptations as recorded in St. Matthew and St. Luke. We have tried in each case to see the appearance of good under which the evil suggestion was cloaked. We have tried to grasp the spiritual principles, drawn from the past history of Israel, in the light of which the evil was unmasked and the attack of the Tempter foiled.

The contest at each step developed naturally from the new situation created by the Lord's Baptism and the signs that accompanied it. The first two turned directly on the fact of the Divine Sonship declared by the Voice from Heaven, and called Him to put forth the powers of the age to come conferred on Him by the descent of the Holy Spirit. They make it clear that these powers were

not to be used to save Himself from any of the trials that human flesh is heir to, nor to compel a reluctant faith in His Divine Sonship. The third sprang from a vision of the Kingdom, which was His by right, and it was concerned with the method of attaining that Kingdom. It involved a conflict of ideals, the Satanic ideal of self-assertion and the Divine ideal of sacrifice.

The victory in each case was won by constant waiting upon God alike for the support of His life, for witness to His claim, and for guidance to His goal. As a result He learnt that within the limits and on the lines so marked out for Him all the resources of Heaven were at His disposal. All things had been committed to Him by His Father (St. Matt. xi. 27).

The wonder of the spiritual insight which the victory reveals.

The whole conflict thus belongs to the supernatural order. It takes place, as St. Paul would say, "*in the heavenlies*" (Eph. vi. 12). Yet we shall miss the most fundamental element in the narrative if we allow ourselves to forget that the subject of the Temptation throughout was the Lord as Man, in that

nature which He shares with us, under the conditions which He came to make it possible for us to share with Him. We shall do well therefore to reflect once more, before we close, on the wonder of His victory from the human side.

The narrative, as a whole, is clearly, when we review it, a revelation of the conditions of our warfare as determined by the nature of our foe. The Devil is, as our Lord warns us (St. John viii. 44), "*a liar and the father thereof.*" He is ever, as St. Paul says (2 Cor. xi. 13), "*fashioning himself into an angel of light.*" He is continually "*lying in wait to deceive*" (Eph. iv. 14). To grapple successfully with "*the spiritual hosts of wickedness*" (Eph. vi. 12), the manifold yet strangely co-operating forces of evil (cf. St. Mark iii. 23), requires unsleeping vigilance. And it is paralysing, as we now know only too well, to breathe continually an atmosphere of suspicion. And yet Jesus shows no sense of constraint. He sees the evil lurking under the most specious forms of good, brushes it aside, and moves onward without faltering from step to step along the path marked out for Him by the will of the Father.

This sureness of spiritual insight is wonder-

ful, is it not ? What account are we to give of it ?

Faculty trained but not created, by the study of the Bible.

The light on His path came indeed, as our study has shown us, from Holy Scripture. The written word acted in His hands like Ithuriel's spear (*Paradise Lost*, iv. 811). Satan is compelled to put off his disguise at its touch. But we cannot explain our Lord's success simply from His knowledge of the Scriptures.

It is, no doubt, good to know that the Bible is a weapon of this " celestial temper," a real touchstone of truth for one who has mastered the use of it. But light is one thing and the eye that can profit by it is another. And the question before us is just " What account are we to give of the sureness of spiritual vision, which the victory of Jesus over the Tempter displays, and of His unerring skill in the use of this part of the spiritual armour which He must have forged for Himself and mastered during His waiting time ? "

If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light.

It is hard not to regard it as something altogether superhuman. It seems, not in degree only, but in kind, to transcend anything of which we have experience in our common human nature. Yet the whole story of the Temptation will lose its relation to our lives, and give us no guidance in our struggles with the same Tempter, if it is not a faculty, which belongs to us as men, and which we may hope to develop and turn to practical account when we have come into our full inheritance as the children of God.

And indeed it is not without foregleams even in human nature as we know it. It has often been noticed that children, and even animals, seem to know, as we say by instinct, whom they can safely trust. We shall not therefore transgress the limits of a perfect humanity if we imagine that our Lord's insight was due to the fact that He possessed this spiritual sensibility in the highest degree. It is surely significant that He should so insistently set a little child before us, when He would have us understand His own nature and the condition of entering into His Kingdom (St. Matt. xviii. 2).

It is difficult, I imagine, for most of us even to guess what the light must be that shines from within on the path of one whose will is perfectly surrendered to the Will of God, whose eye is single, and whose conscience is clean. Such an one must be always full of the Spirit, and of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, endowed with, if you like possessed by, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding. Only by this possession the operation of no faculty in the man is suspended. He is in no sense turned into a machine. He is rather made in the fullest sense master of himself, and develops from within, as in the truest sense part of himself, powers and capacities hitherto unsuspected.

In some such way as this, I believe, our Lord, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, found light shining from within Himself on the path of life, even in the Wilderness and in conflict with the Tempter. And coming to know Himself as the Light of the World, was able to promise that those who followed Him should not walk in darkness, but should have each one of them the light that comes from being alive (St. John viii. 12).

Evil in the last resort is darkness, and cannot get a grip on anyone who is obediently walking in the light (1 St. John v. 18).

EPILOGUE

I

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE NARRATIVE

HITHERTO we have been considering the Gospel narratives of the Temptation in detail. Before we conclude it will be well to bring to a focus the light that the incident, studied from within and interpreted throughout in the terms of a human experience, throws on the whole life of which it is a part.

The most obvious fact about the narrative from this point of view is that it presupposes throughout that He to whom the Temptations came was convinced in His own mind that He was the Christ, the Son of God, and that in some way the forces of Nature were at His command.

What are we to say of the significance of this fact ?

The Evangelists make the same Presuppositions.

First this : No one now doubts that all the Evangelists shared this conviction. Maurice pointed out in his *Unity of the New Testament* —and seventy years of critical enquiry have at last led even adverse critics to the same conclusion—that none of the Gospels is really intelligible unless we regard it as the work of a man who believed that Jesus was " the Son of God and King of Man."

I do not, of course, mean to imply that everyone admits that the Evangelists were right in their conviction. Schweitzer, for example, in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, maintains that it was only at the end of His ministry, and as a counsel of despair, that Jesus determined to assume the rôle of Messiah. And critics of this class will naturally treat the narrative of the Temptation as an imaginative creation. But even so, they will have to admit that the conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, was not a new thing in the time of the Evangelists. It is required to explain the origin of one at least of the sources which they employ.

The Narrative a Fragment of Autobiography.

We, however, have seen reason to believe that, so far from being an imaginative creation by an unknown writer, the narrative is derived from the teaching of Jesus Himself.

In other words, it is a fragment of autobiography, the only one of its kind, which, so far as I can see, the Evangelists have incorporated. If so, it possesses an unique value for those who wish to interpret the life of Jesus "from within."

What light then, we must proceed to ask, does the narrative, regarded as a fragment of Autobiography, throw on the life of Jesus as a whole?

The fact of its existence shows that Jesus was desirous of sharing with His Disciples the knowledge of the various directions on which He had to be on His guard in the fulfilment of His commission, and in the use of the powers with which He was entrusted. His object, no doubt, would be to forewarn them against dangers which they too would have to meet one day, and to give them guidance in their striving and an assurance of strength sufficient to overcome. At the same time we may well believe that He longed to bespeak their

sympathy and their co-operation in the work that He had still to do, by an intimate self-revelation. In this He was not altogether unsuccessful, if we may judge from the grateful acknowledgment that He makes in St. Luke xxii. 28 to those "who had continued with Him in His temptations."

The Presuppositions regarded as a Self-revelation.

The direct teaching of the narrative from this point of view has been sufficiently indicated in the preceding studies, and we need not traverse the ground afresh now. But its indirect teaching, the fundamental conviction as to His Person and Office, which, as we have seen, the whole narrative presupposes, deserves fuller consideration than we have as yet given it.

We must try if by any means we can attain to a clearer apprehension of what it meant to Jesus to be "the Christ the Son of God," and of the stages by which His Human consciousness was aroused to the fact that He had the privilege and the responsibility of bearing these titles before men.

II

WHAT DID JESUS MEAN BY THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM?

It will be well to begin by considering the relation in which Jesus stood at the time of His temptation to "the Kingdom of Heaven."

The opening words of the first Study (p. 1) summarize results, the grounds for which I had already laid before my readers in earlier articles. The position I had reached was that the Baptism of Jesus by John was not only, as all must admit, a decisive turning point in His earthly life, but that it marked the actual commencement of the "coming of the Kingdom" which the prophets had foretold, and the way for which the Baptist had been sent to prepare.

To understand this position we must turn aside for a moment to consider what the idea conveyed to an Oriental mind by the phrase "the Kingdom of Heaven," or, what is the same thing, "the Kingdom of God," really was. In this connexion far too little

attention, as it seems to me, has been paid to the illuminating treatment of the phrase in Dalman's *Words of Jesus*. He points out that according to Rabbinic usage the first thought suggested by the phrase is not that of "a body of people acknowledging the authority of God," but of God Himself in the exercise of His authority.

So in the Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible a phrase like "The Lord is King for ever and ever" (Ex. xv. 18) appears as "The 'Kingdom,' i.e. The 'Sovereignty' or 'Kingship,' of the Lord endures for ever and ever," and in Isaiah xl. 9: "Behold your God" is rendered by "The 'Kingdom' or 'Sovereignty' of your God has been made manifest." And it is interesting to notice that, according to Rabbinic teaching, this manifestation of "the Kingdom" of God is made to the world in and by His faithful people. "Before our father Abraham came into the world God was, as it were, only the King of heaven: but when Abraham came, he made Him to be King over heaven and earth." Similarly everyone among the descendants of Abraham who "separates himself from transgression" or who repeats his Creed (Deut. vi. 4 f.), "takes on himself 'the

Kingdom ' or the yoke of the Kingdom or Sovereignty of God."

The Baptism of Jesus marked His Entrance into the Kingdom.

If, in the light of this thought, we come to consider the significance of the Baptism of Jesus, it will be seen that as the faith and obedience of Abraham marked the first stage in the manifestation of the Sovereignty of God over men, and opened a way by which God in and through him could enter on a new relation first with his family and then with all the families of the earth which should be blessed through him, so the obedience of Jesus to the call of God through John marked the final stage in that manifestation. By taking on Himself the yoke of the promised kingdom He opened a way by which God in and through Him could enter on a new relation to men, and by which all men who learn from Him to take up the same yoke may enter on a new relation to God.

In other words, Jesus at His Baptism entered into " the Kingdom," and by entering in Himself He brought the Kingdom into direct contact with the lives of men.

It was at His Baptism that the Prayer which

He Himself has taught us received the earnest of its fulfilment, and "the Kingdom came" in Him while yet on earth "as it is in heaven." God had found one human heart completely surrendered to His obedience, and through it His Sovereignty could at last have free play among men, manifesting all His Glory and perfectly revealing His loving Will.

If so, we can understand the sense in which Jesus in His earliest Galilean preaching (St. Mark i. 15) declared, "*The Kingdom of God has drawn nigh.*" The dawn of the new age had already begun, and men might know that it was already within their reach, as a matter of conscious experience and not merely of pious aspiration.

The Second Coming of the Kingdom.

What hinders us from grasping this rudimentary fact with regard to our Lord's Ministry is that He also speaks of a "coming of the Kingdom," a manifestation of the Sovereignty of God in judgment on His rebellious people, which was still in the future while He was on earth.

The outward features of this second "Coming of the Kingdom" are portrayed under startling figures, which rivet our

attention, while they baffle all our efforts to interpret them in detail. They are catastrophic. Though the chief external incident to which they refer is the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, they present the picture of a world-wide Judgment. They issue in the establishment of a new order, a new heaven and a new earth for all mankind. The scene they conjure up is more in accordance with the pomp and circumstance that popular anticipation prescribed for the entrance of Messiah on the stage of human history than the meeting of the Carpenter of Nazareth with the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan.

And yet this second "coming of the Kingdom" is in a real sense subordinate to the first. It introduced no essentially new element into the relation between God and Man. It was simply the final establishment of the new relation which the first "coming" had inaugurated. Jesus Himself "entered into the Kingdom" at His Baptism. He entered, that is, in heart and mind into that perfect relation to the Will of God, which God designed for Man when He created him, and for which all the centuries of God's training of the nations and of Israel had been a preparation. And the mighty works that He wrought,

or that, as St. John's Gospel expresses it, the Father wrought in Him, were the result of the powers of the "age to come" which became quick and active in Him after the Holy Spirit had come upon Him, tokens, as He Himself told the Pharisees (St. Matt. xii. 28), that "the Kingdom" had come to them before they were aware of it. Jesus had no doubt to be Himself glorified before He could impart the Spirit that He had received, and the old order had to pass away "in blood and fire and vapour of smoke" before the significance of the new order could be fully discerned, or the Son of Man be fully come: but "the leaven" was present and at work in the world from the moment that the Holy Spirit fell on Jesus at His Baptism; and we may add, that according to our Lord's own words, as recorded both by St. Matthew and St. Luke, the coming of the Son of Man *in clouds* to judge His apostate and rebellious people began from the moment that their rejection of Him was consummated on the Cross.

III

THE MESSIAHSHIP AND THE DIVINE SONSHIP OF JESUS

When did Jesus become the Christ?

Let us pass on now to consider the development of the Messianic consciousness in Jesus. We are not told, but it is natural to assume that He had learnt as a child from His Mother something of the high destiny that was awaiting him as heir to the throne of David. We can see from the records of His Ministry that His mind was full of the teaching of the Scriptures with regard to the nature and office and work of the promised Messiah. Here again we may assume with considerable probability that the characteristic features of His interpretation of the sacred writings, especially His identification of the Davidic King with the Son of Man of Daniel's vision, and with the Servant of the LORD of Isaiah xl.–lxvi. were fixed during His "waiting time" before the appearance of the Baptist.

Yet neither the teaching of the Scriptures

nor the messages from God that had preceded and accompanied His Birth could do more than define aspiration and quicken hope. As the name Messiah shows, He could not enter on His office until He had received an anointing.

If, however, the view that we have taken of the relation of the Baptism of Jesus to the coming of the Kingdom be correct, we need not look further for an answer to the question, "At what time did Jesus become and know that He had become Messiah?" If recognizing John as a man sent from God Jesus saw in His Baptism a sign that the time was fulfilled for the coming of the Kingdom, and manifested the Sovereignty of God by surrendering Himself to do His Will, the signs that accompanied His Baptism must have been a token to Him that God had accepted His offering, and the descent of the Holy Spirit not only supplied the foundation for the witness of the Baptist, it was the anointing which enabled him to rise to the height of His high calling and do the work entrusted to Him in bringing in the Kingdom.

This work was, as we have seen, nothing less than to express the Divine Sovereignty by surrendering Himself to be possessed by

it and so in the strictest sense embodying it. The enthronement of the Messiah did not indeed come till the Ascension. But His office was from the first regal. As God's vice-regent He was the true King of Man.

The fact that, owing to the popular misconceptions which clung round the name Messiah, Jesus was unable to claim the title publicly before the close of His earthly Ministry is not in itself any reason for supposing that Jesus Himself had any doubt as to His right to it from the first. It may well be that He had to live the life and die the death and be raised with the resurrection of the Messiah before the title could be indissolubly linked with His earthly name in the Christian Creed without the risk of fatal misunderstanding.

What is implied in the Messianic title, 'Son of God'?

Closely connected with the Messianic sovereignty is the personal relation in which, according to the voices of the Prophets, the Messianic King was to stand to God, as His Son, His First-born. There was nothing in this relationship inconsistent with the perfect humanity of the coming heir to the Throne of

David. The titles "Son of David" and "Son of God" stand side by side in the message of the Angel to Mary in Nazareth. There is no reason to suppose that the use of the term by the Prophets or by the Baptist carried with it any conscious implication of the deeper mystery of the inter-relation of Divine Persons within the Godhead of which we are conscious when we use the term.

The relation of the Divine Sonship of the Messiah to the Divine Sonship of Humanity.

The mere fact of its use with Divine authority as descriptive of a man had lessons of its own to which we shall do well to give heed. Our Lord's public teaching shows that He held that it implied in the last resort a real community of nature between the Human and the Divine (see St. John x. 35). Nor can anything less justify the teaching with regard to the Fatherhood of God, of which the Gospels are full, or the prospect of attaining to Divine Sonship which they everywhere hold out to men. Indeed, the possibility of a perfect revelation of the Divine in terms of the Human depends on the fact that the likeness between the Human and the Divine is

essential, not accidental: a matter of inner reality, not of superficial resemblance.

The Divine Sonship of the Messiah to which the Scriptures testify may therefore be regarded in the first instance as rooted in the perfection of His humanity.

It would indeed be His in a sense unique and incommunicable. And it is remarkable that the first recorded utterance of the child Jesus (St. Luke ii. 49) shows how His whole outlook on life was dominated by the thought of a special link uniting Him to His Father in heaven. But this fact would not interfere with the uttermost community of thought and feeling between Him and His brethren. As Son of Man he embodied consciously and perfectly the highest characteristic of the whole race of which He is the Head.

Approached from this side the Voice at the Baptism may therefore be regarded as an affirmation by the Father Himself of the right of the perfect humanity of Jesus to the title "Son of God" at the same time that it conferred on Him the office and dignity of Messiah (Ps. ii. 7).

In some such way as this the Baptist, as we have seen, would have interpreted the words. In this sense the Pharisees would have

understood the witness that the Baptist bore to Jesus on the strength of them (St. John i. 34) if they had taken his witness seriously. Even to Jesus Himself the words must have carried a welcome assurance that the yearning of His Human Heart was fulfilled and that His God was indeed His Father in Heaven.

Was Jesus while on earth conscious that His Messianic Sonship sprang from a yet deeper root of Eternal Sonship?

There remains, however, a further question which we cannot put by, however much we may shrink from the task of trying to find an answer to it.

Our studies have been made throughout on a twofold assumption: first, that the Creed of Christendom is true, and that, as St. John says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," or as the same thought is expressed in the Nicene Creed, "The only-begotten Son of God who is one in essence with the Father was made man"; and secondly, that His Humanity was in essence, not in seeming only, one with ours, in such a way that all His thoughts, words and deeds are capable of being understood in the terms of a per-

fectly human, albeit a humanly perfect experience.

We are therefore bound to test the validity of our assumptions by asking ourselves how far it is possible to correlate these two facts, not merely as facts which have somehow to be grasped and held together in all our own Theological thinking, but also as co-existing in the Incarnate Son as the ultimate ground of all His experience, and as grasped and held together by Him as soon as He attained to a clear knowledge of Himself as mirrored in His Own Human consciousness.

To put the problem in a simple and concrete form, the Voice heard at the Baptism would be understood by John as referring to the Divine Sonship of the Man Christ Jesus. We hear in it a greeting from God the Father to God the Son. What are we to say of the meaning conveyed by the utterance to the human consciousness of Jesus Himself? Granted that it included all that John was able to apprehend, would it involve a violation of the limits of a truly human consciousness to suppose that the words conveyed to Jesus the thought of the deeper mystery which we find implied in it?

What value are we to attach to the evidence of the Fourth Gospel?

This question opens out many fruitful lines of enquiry. I cannot here do more than indicate some of them.

The first involves the discussion of a somewhat widely current opinion with regard to the most important of our sources of information.

Not a few of the words of Jesus recorded in the Fourth Gospel seem to be a direct expression of the deeper mystery and to imply that the Speaker was directly conscious of it. Some, however, refuse to regard these utterances as in any strict sense historical. It is so much easier, they contend, to suppose that the writer of the Gospel recast—shall we say "subconsciously"? — his reminiscences of his Master's teaching in the light of the Resurrection and Ascension, and of the development of the Christian Doctrine of God for which St. Paul was in large measure responsible.

On the other hand, we may surely urge with justice that it is extremely difficult in any case to see how men who had known Jesus "in the days of His flesh" can have been made aware of the stupendous fact of His true

Divinity. We may well doubt whether even Pentecost could have opened their eyes to it, if it had not been for the memory of words that they had heard Him utter, when as yet they were unable to grasp their full significance. And even granted the possibility that in any particular case a saying may have been transfigured by a trick of memory which deceived even the disciple who recorded it, are we to suppose that the other disciples, or the congregations instructed by them, would have accepted the changeling, still less a systematic transformation of the whole tradition, without protest if it introduced a new and unprecedented element into the Gospel story?

I believe, therefore, that we may accept even these reminiscences in the Fourth Gospel as historical, and treat even the most startling of the utterances, both in the Synoptists and in St. John, as the expression of an experience of Jesus in our flesh, mediated through a consciousness which did not transcend the limits of that which is truly human.

The Gospels our only source of illumination.

The subject is beset by peculiar difficulties, because apart from the evidence of Holy Scripture we have nothing but faint gleams of poetic

intuition to help us to answer the questions, "What and whence am I?" and "Whither am I going?" We cannot conceive of ourselves as speaking with assurance on such points as these. We do not see that there is any element in our experience which can help us to understand how Jesus can have become aware of the answers to them in His own case. So we stand in simple amazement before such an utterance as "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (St. John xvi. 28).

The ultimate difficulty of the problem springs from the difficulty of conceiving the co-existence and interpenetration of the Human and Divine Natures in One Person. And this difficulty must remain insoluble so long as we approach it as a problem in metaphysics requiring the adjustment of two mutually exclusive abstractions. For the problem is fundamentally vital and moral, and its solution must lie in the harmony of two mutually inclusive realities, the key to which must be sought in deeper meditation on the nature and obligations of Sonship in every sphere in which we ourselves have direct experience of it. And, in any case, if,

as a fact, such a consciousness of Sonship at once Human and Divine did manifest itself in Jesus, all our material for investigating its nature and content is supplied by the Gospels, and it will be well to examine carefully the facts which they attest before we re-write them in order to satisfy our own canons of probability.

The evidence of the Synoptists with regard to our Lord's consciousness of an unique Divine Sonship.

When we examine the relevant passages we find that in the first three Gospels, apart from the clear distinction which Jesus draws between Himself and the rest of mankind in regard to His relation to the Father, they consist first of passages like St. Mark xiii. 32 and St. Mark xi. 27 (=St. Luke x. 22) in which He speaks of Himself as "the Son" absolutely in relation to "the Father." Next, of the question with regard to David's Son and David's Lord found in all three (Mark xii. 37 ; Matt. xxii. 43 ; Luke xx. 44), which implies a consciousness that this Son of David was the root as well as the offspring of David (Rev. xxii. 16), and so must in some sense have been in existence before him ; and

lastly, of the claim (in Mark xiv. 62, etc.) before the High Priest to fulfil the prophecy of the Son of Man foreseen in Daniel vii.

This mysterious person is, in one section of the Book of Enoch, which is generally supposed to be pre-Christian, identified with the coming Saviour, and regarded as already existent in heaven, only waiting the time of His manifestation on earth. If the date of this section of the Book of Enoch could be established, and if we might be assured that it was current in the circles in which Jesus was brought up, it would supply us with one source through which the truth may have been brought home to Him. In any case, it shows that the pre-existence of the Son of Man was a thought which might naturally have suggested itself to a devout reader of the prophecy of Daniel.

These passages, taken all together, amount to a strong conviction of what we may call a mysterious background to the personality of the speaker. They do not assert the fact of His Pre-existence, nor do they imply any distinct recollection of the conditions of existence in the home from which He had come.

The evidence of St. John.

In the Gospel of St. John the case, at any rate under the first of these two heads, is markedly different. "*Before Abraham came into being, I am*" (St. John viii. 58) is a distinct and public assertion of a consciousness that the roots of His being are eternal. And in private, His teaching to His chosen disciples is increasingly definite, until it culminates in the precise declaration, to which I have already called attention: "*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father*" (xvi. 28). And in the communing with His Father that followed immediately on this utterance, He prays explicitly (xvii. 5): "*And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with the glory that I had before the world was by Thy side.*" But even these utterances, when we look closely into them, do not amount to more than a conviction that the Divine Sonship, of which He was conscious in His Human Nature, was the expression on earth of an eternal heavenly reality. They do not imply any conception of the nature of the Heavenly Glory, from which He had come forth and to which He was returning, other

than the fundamental fact with regard to it, that it must have been and must hereafter be a condition of perfect communion with the Father. They are perfectly intelligible as an inference, or, if you will, an intuition, arising out of the facts of His present experience. We are by no means compelled to regard them as implying a clear reminiscence of an ante-natal condition, substantiating the poet's dream so beautifully expressed by Wordsworth in his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality.* Even the reference to Abraham in St. John viii. 58, which might seem at first sight to carry us further, may well appear to those, who accept the account of the Transfiguration, as a result of the Communion with the spirits of just men made perfect, into which His communion with His Father opened the door even "in the days of His Flesh."

There is nothing to show how far back in His conscious human experience it may be possible to trace the roots of this intuition. There can be no doubt that the Voice from heaven, as interpreted to His human consciousness by the Holy Spirit poured out on Him at His Baptism, must have marked the crisis when the foregleams, which He must

have enjoyed in His waiting time at Nazareth, passed on into the perfect day of a clear and abiding conviction.

Can we think of our Lord's Humanity as pre-existent?

There is a further question with regard to the ideal pre-existence of the Lord's Humanity in the Eternal Word which need not detain us now. It is not different in kind from the question with regard to our own ideal pre-existence in Him implied in St. Paul's teaching in Ephesians i. 4, with regard to our "election in Him before the foundation of the world," and in the teaching of St. John's Prologue (St. John i. 4), that all that has come into being in time was eternally existent as "life in Him" before its manifestation on earth (cf. Rev. iv. 11). For this question has no direct bearing on the possibility of reconciling the conviction of a Divine Sonship rooted in an Eternal Relation to the Father with the conditions of a consciousness which conformed in all points to the limitations of a perfect humanity.

IV

OUR LORD'S USE OF "THE POWERS OF THE AGE TO COME"

We have now examined the presuppositions of the narrative of the Temptation with regard to the relation in which Jesus stood from the time of His Baptism onwards to the coming of the Kingdom, and with regard to His consciousness of the Messianic calling and of Divine Sonship. These presuppositions have, as we have seen, an unique value for the light they throw on the inner side of the life of Jesus, when they are regarded as indirect self-revelations through a fragment of auto-biography.

There remains one further presupposition, on which it is important that something should be said before we bring our study to a close. The whole narrative presupposes in Jesus the conscious possession of power to control the operation of the forces of nature. It is assumed that He could, if He chose, turn stones into bread by a word, and command the service of Angels to save Him from destruction if He

threw Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple.

We are not concerned here with the discussion of the whole problem of Miracles, nor even of the specific questions which have been raised with regard to the Miracles of our Lord's Ministry. From the standpoint of these studies we cannot attribute them to the direct operation of His Divine Nature. We must regard them as the work in each case of His Humanity: though the humanity capable of wielding this power is not humanity under normal conditions, but humanity using the capacities, which it develops by correspondence to the new environment provided by membership in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our business is simply to see if we can find any means of entering into our Lord's mind with regard to the nature of this power and the conditions of its use.

The light thrown on the subject by the Temptations is chiefly negative. Jesus refuses to use the power to satisfy the cravings of His own appetite, or for personal display. He will not use it to lift Himself above the conditions under which common men live and hunger, or to put any violence on their faith. We must examine specific instances of the

use of the power if we desire more positive information.

Here we may be thankful that St. John has supplied us with just the material that we need in his record of the teaching that Jesus gave when on His defence after the cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (St. John v.). I have dealt with this chapter in two earlier studies in *The Lay Reader*, and I cannot do better than conclude by reprinting them as they stand.

TWO STUDIES IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE EXERCISE OF SUPERNATURAL POWER

A

The Power of the Son.

"*My Father worketh even until now, and I work.*"
S. John v. 17.

The Sabbath Question.

The cure of the impotent man had been wrought, no doubt deliberately wrought, on the Sabbath, and the command to the sick man, to "take up his bed," was meant to call attention to this fact. In each of the Gospels we read how the opposition of the Pharisees hardened into murderous hate in consequence of our Lord's attitude towards the rules laid down by them for Sabbath observance. His action was a direct challenge to the dominant principles of their public teaching. The earlier Evangelists record the defence which Jesus gave of His own action, drawn from the human side of the Institution. "*The Sabbath was made for man.*" It was in intention a gift from God to suffering and toiling humanity. But the Pharisees were making it an intoler-

able burthen, an elaborate trap to involve the unwary in mortal sin, and teaching men to sacrifice all their natural instincts of helpfulness and pity in homage to the idol which they had set up.

The Sabbath had also a Divine side. Both in Exodus xx. 8 ff. and in Deuteronomy v. 12 ff. it commemorates a Divine event. Obedience to the command involves a direct reproduction of a Divine exemplar. In the form under which we are most familiar with it, in Exodus xx., the institution is a mirror in which men are to see reflected both the activity and the rest of God. It is designed to mould their lives after the pattern of the revelation that it holds up before them. If, therefore, Jesus was to do His appointed work in bringing men into "the rest which remaineth for the Children of God," and above all, if His life was to be an effective revelation of the life of His Father, He could not shrink from entering on what could not fail to be a life and death struggle on the question of the true method and spirit of Sabbath observance. It must seem strange, when we reflect on it, that Jesus should have chosen to risk, nay to ensure, the ruin of His earthly Ministry, rather than wait till sunset to heal a man who

had already been thirty-eight years in his infirmity. It is characteristic of St. John that he records the words in which the Lord helps us to see why, in view of the Divine side of the institution of the Sabbath, no other course was open to Him.

The Son following the law of His Father's action.

"*My Father*," He says in answer to their challenge, "*worketh even until now*, is at work at this present moment, *and I work*." The point of this defence clearly is that, as Son, His life must be expected to reflect the life of His Father. And so His hearers understood Him. For, instead of raising the objection which we should have anticipated, that the commandment speaks of God as resting, they fasten on the pronoun "My," and the very practical application that Jesus was making of the relationship as revealing the law of His own life. He was making God His Father in a sense altogether strange and unprecedented. In spite of the commandment, it had never occurred to them that their lives ought to reflect the life of God.

An outline of the argument of S. John v. 19-47.

Our Lord, therefore, is able to leave on one side the speculative question of the compatibility of rest and activity in the Divine life, and to re-state from various sides the claim which was exciting opposition. It is no doubt a wonderful claim, but, rightly understood, it is anything but self-assertive. It calls men to realize, from what they saw, the power of God working through an utterly surrendered will. He had, no doubt, marvellous powers to exercise, and a position to fill of unique dignity and responsibility. All judgment was committed to Him. All men must honour the Son as they honour the Father. But He has not come in His Own Name, seeking glory for Himself from men, but in His Father's Name. He does not even bear witness to Himself. He is content to leave the truth of His claim in His Father's keeping. But, for the sake of His hearers, He will remind them of the evidence that was already before them—the testimony of the Baptist; the testimony of the works that He was showing them from the Father; and the word of the Father Himself, acknowledging and commissioning His

Son. But alas ! they were out of touch with the Father, and so could not recognize His Son, or bring the testimony of their own Scriptures to its fruition by enrolling themselves as disciples of Him of whom they spoke.

Such is the spirit of the whole defence. In the light of that spirit—utterly free from any taint of self-seeking, yet clear and resolute in its assertion of the position assigned to Him by His Father, and so sure of God that He can face without flinching the unbelief and even the murderous hate of the leaders of His people—we can venture to look a little more closely into the revelation that He gives us of the source and spring of all His human activity.

Filial power, rooted in communion with the Father, essentially derivative and dependent.

"*The Son,*" He tells us, it is the principle of all filial action, "*can do nothing strictly self-originated. He can only throw Himself into any work on which He sees that His Father is engaged.*" Even so, the range of possible activity that is open to Him is startling in its extent. "*For, whatsoever work the Father is engaged in, that the Son*

undertakes after His example." It must, of course, seem strange to us that one in our flesh should have such insight into the counsel and working of God. Yet, if the word " beloved " heard at the Baptism corresponds, as we should expect, to a real fact in the relationship between the Father and the Son, is it not natural that there should be no secrets between them ? And is not a work of healing, utterly beyond the power of uninspired human faculty, wrought in the Father's name, a witness that the enabling insight is a reality, and has been given to the Son ? Can we doubt that even more marvellous works are yet to come from the same source ?

Such is the analysis that our Lord Himself gives us of the power in which He wrought His mighty works. Simple as it is, if the relation of Father and Son is a reality, it yet eludes—and, I suppose, until we in our turn are " born from above," must continue to elude our comprehension. The directness and the potency of the communion with our Father in Heaven, which He has prepared for us in His Son, can be known only from within. Meanwhile it may help some of us to notice that what our Lord tells us here of the secret of His own power is closely parallel to the

teaching which He gives on the conditions of prevailing prayer in St. Mark xi. 23 f : " *Have faith, which springs from the vision of God, and is worthy of Him in whom it rests. Verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but believe that what he says is taking place*" (is already in the line of God's will), "*he shall have it. For this cause I say unto you, all things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye received them, at the moment of your prayer, and ye shall have them.*"

These conditions can only be fulfilled if and when our eyes are opened to see the hand of God at work in the circumstances with which we are called to deal, and find grace to take our prayerful share in the accomplishment of His purposes. And yet prayer was a reality and a power in the life of our Lord, and is meant to be a power in ours. It must, therefore, somehow be possible to fulfil the conditions.

B

The Laws of Spiritual Healing.

"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."
S. John xiv. 9.

The Son the perfect image of the Father.

We considered in our last study the defence that our Lord gave of His action in healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda on a Sabbath day. He had done the work, to which the Jewish authorities took exception, because He knew that it was in the line of His Father's will, a work after His Father's heart. The words imply an intimate communion between the Father and the Son throughout the earthly Ministry, of such a kind as to make every act of the Son, and even as He tells us from time to time (St. John xii. 49, xiv. 10) every word, an expression of the Father's heart and will. Nothing less than this was required, if the life of the Son, lived in human flesh before the eyes of men, was to be a perfect revelation of the invisible Father. And such a life was possible, without any detriment to, nay rather as the direct result

of, the perfection of its humanity, because human nature was in the beginning created "in the image of God" to show forth His likeness before the eyes of angels and men (Gen. i. 26).

The Subordination of the Son of God.

It will be well to keep our attention fixed for a little longer on the cure of the impotent man and on the teaching with regard to the laws of His own action that our Lord based on it. The Evangelist clearly regards this "sign" as supplying the key to the understanding of every incident that he has to record. The main points have already come before us. It will be worth while, however, even at the risk of some repetition, to go over them again. The first is the pains which our Lord takes to disclaim any personal credit for Himself arising from the work of healing. All that He did, and all that He said, would be misunderstood if it was regarded as originating with Himself, or made the foundation of a claim to independent power or dignity. He had not come in His own name (St. John v. 43, x. 25). He had not come to do His own will (St. John vi. 38 f.). He

had not come to seek His own glory (St. John viii. 50) or the glory which comes from the approval of men (St. John v. 41).

We find it, I believe, peculiarly difficult to take this disclaimer seriously. It is so utterly alien to our own habits of mind and action. We still, like the Jews in our Lord's time, instinctively seek "honour one from another," and therefore this utter subordination of "the Son" to "the Father" remains incredible to us. Yet subordination is clearly fundamental to the whole relationship. It was, we may remember, a determining element among the motives that brought our Lord to the Baptism of John.

At the same time, the subordination was in no sense forced or constrained. It was rooted in perfect trust and love. It issued in a life of uninterrupted communion, in an unclouded consciousness of perfect mutual understanding and sympathy, in which filial confidence was met by fatherly care and protection, and the Son's delight to do His Father's will is matched by the good pleasure of the Father in the Son of His Love.

Such fellowship could not fail to quicken spiritual insight. We should expect to find one who had been admitted into it "of quick

understanding in the fear of the Lord," able to trace the working of His Father's Hand, and to follow the guidance of His Will even through all the tangled web of human affairs. And it is not surprising that with the insight should come power, and the Son should be able to do all that He saw His Father doing. Such sympathy and such insight would keep Him from moment to moment an instrument in His Father's Hand "easily usable" for the execution of His plan (2 Tim. ii. 21). When the heavens opened above Him He received power to live the life of the Beloved Son on earth.

The Laws of Spiritual Healing.

With this key to the understanding of the incident, let us come back to the healing of the impotent man. The presence of disease and death in the world, as the Lord saw them, was an alien presence inconsistent with the perfection which could alone satisfy the heart of the Creator, and in the contemplation of which alone His Father could rest. Wherever, therefore, He met disease He knew that His Father was at work to counteract and cast out the intruder. Even death itself could not be the final goal of any life that came from

Him. In every realm of created being His eyes were open to see the Spirit of His Father at work raising the dead and quickening them (St. John v. 21). He was, therefore, ever on the alert for such occasions as the Father put in His way of lifting the veil that hid this ever-present, healing, life-giving power from the eyes of His fellow men.

Here, of course, we find ourselves confronted with the difficulty, which to our impatience, or, what is the same thing, to our little faith, often seems insuperable. If the forces of God are really set in array against it, how can disease continue to exist for a moment in His universe ? Why had Jesus to choose among the sufferers whom He met who should hear the healing word ?

There were a great multitude of sick waiting for the troubling of the waters on that Sabbath day. Why did He cure only one ? It is hard for us to realize that the Divine power to heal can for any good reason subject itself to any limitations. Here, however, nothing is said to throw light on this problem. This incident only shows what barriers the Divine power can break down, whenever the conditions for its manifestation are fulfilled. For this disease was of thirty-

eight years' standing. The sufferer, up to the time of his cure, had been living out of harmony with God (v. 14). He had not hope enough even to ask for help. He did not know who was speaking to him. Yet his will was set on being made whole. He was ready when the command came to make the effort required of him. And so new life enters into him as he hears and obeys the voice of the Son of God. And he becomes an abiding witness to the presence of the Spirit of the Father abiding on, and working for the salvation of the world through, His beloved Son.

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